

**Core Question 4: Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?**

The External Evaluation Performance Framework, outlined in Core Question 4, gauges if the school is providing the appropriate conditions for success. Core Question 4 consists of ten indicators designed to assess schools on curriculum and pedagogy, processes and systems for support and guidance, and climate.

4.1. Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?		
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
4.1 Rating	The school <u>Meets Standard</u> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
Sub-Indicators	Sub-indicators	
	Curriculum aligns with state standards	
	Systematic reviews of curriculum are conducted to identify gaps based on student performance	
	Regular review of scope and sequence to ensure presentation of content in time for testing	
	Sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas that are prioritized and focus on core learning objectives	
	Understanding and/or consensus amongst staff as to how the curriculum documents and related program materials are used to effectively deliver instruction	
	Programs and materials available to deliver the curriculum effectively.	

Arlington meets the standard in this section of the report. The school's curriculum aligns with state standards, and personnel at the school conduct monthly reviews of it to identify gaps based on student performance. They also regularly review the curriculum to ensure that content is taught in time for state testing, using the data that they get from Acuity and other standardized testing and employing a process that the school calls "data dives." While it's not explicitly obvious from the written curriculum, school personnel have developed and discussed a sequence of topics across grade levels and content areas that is prioritized and focused on core learning objectives. As stated by administrators, the school keeps master curriculum maps,

teachers reflect back on each unit taught from those master maps, and during the summer all school personnel are engaged in revising the curriculum, where need be, ensuring that high-priority content and skills are subject to focus. Lastly, Arlington teachers uniformly use curriculum documents and related program materials to deliver instruction, and they are sufficient, as was observed by the site visit team.

4.2. Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?		
<b>Indicator Targets</b>	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
<b>4.2 Rating</b>	The school is <b>Approaching Standard</b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
<b>Sub-indicators</b>	<b>Sub-indicators</b>	
	Curriculum is implemented in the majority of classrooms according to its design	
	Instruction is focused on core learning objectives	
	Pace of instruction/lessons and content delivery possesses the appropriate rigor and challenge	
	Instructional activities possess variety and/or use of differentiated strategies to engage a wide range of student interests, abilities, and learning needs	
	Sufficient feedback is provided on instructional practices	

Most lessons included appropriate standards-based objectives for the grade level of the students, and instruction is focused on meeting the objective. Teachers discussed extended learning opportunities available to students, but these seemed to be mostly beyond the normal school hours. The pacing in most classes appeared to be appropriate for the majority of students, and as a result, minimal instructional time was lost due to the need to redirect students or using wait time to get them to refocus.

In most classes, the instructional activities were teacher-centered with a limited variety of differentiation strategies (usually whole-class discussion and note-taking or independent writing). Little differentiation was observed. For those students engaged in the assignment, most teachers offered one-on-one feedback as they circled through the students' independent work time or through responses in the whole-class discussion. However, because the teacher worked with students or small groups individually, this left little time to meet with every student during the class period.

Focus group members lauded feedback from the school administrators but stated that feedback opportunities were limited due to the cuts to school-based coaches. The teachers discussed how the cut in the coaching positions translates into teachers receiving little feedback or development support in terms of Operator resources and overall because they no longer have access to weekly classroom coaching and feedback.

4.3. For secondary students, does the school provide sufficient guidance on and support preparation for post-secondary options?		
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
4.3. Rating	The school <b>Does Not Meet Standard</b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
Sub-indicators	Sub-indicators	
	Students are prepared for rigorous post-secondary opportunities through challenging course work and rigorous job preparation programs (e.g., Advanced Placement courses, internships, independent study, industry certification programs)	
	High expectations exist to motivate and prepare students for post-secondary academic opportunities	
	Sufficient material resources and personnel guidance is available to inform students of post-secondary options	
	Opportunities exist for extracurricular engagement and activities (e.g., athletics, academic clubs, vocational) to increase post-secondary options	
	Meets or exceeds Indiana Core 40 graduation standard requirements	

Arlington Community High School has a trained counselor who oversees not only the scheduling, but also the postsecondary preparation for seniors. Although the school is not large, given that it consists of a middle school and a high school and enrolls over 400 students, it appears that this counselor would benefit from having additional support to roll out postsecondary programs. Also, faculty mentioned that the counselor/social worker split responsibilities between counseling and staffing the welcome center. To date, the focus has been on getting all twelfth graders graduation-ready and ensuring that 100% apply to at least one postsecondary educational option (the school does engage partners: Upward Bound, JAG, Army

Recruiters, and is developing relationships with Ivy Tech and institutes of higher education). This singular focus on twelfth graders, however, means that the counselor has limited capacity for prepping younger students so that they do not require as much work when they reach the twelfth grade. While the school meets the Indiana Core 40 graduation requirements, it does not offer any AP Classes (it plans to build these in for the 2014–15 school year) and offers minimal extracurricular activities for students outside of athletics—the school cites that because roughly 80% need ECA prep, the school has discontinued many extracurricular clubs.

The school offers minimal internship or career-exploration programs, and no industry certification programs. The limited availability of advanced coursework at Arlington may be a deterrent to students who aspire to enter top postsecondary institutions and training programs. Despite concerns about the lack of challenging coursework, limited resources, and limited opportunities for extracurricular engagement, the school leadership team has clear goals for its graduating class: 100% Core 40 Diploma and application to at least one school. Due to the focus and small class size, Arlington students may achieve postsecondary success based on the sheer drive and focus of its team. Moving forward, however, the team needs to build out its programming to ensure student preparation for the variety of postsecondary options and to ensure sustainability of the school model.

4.4. Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?		
<b>Indicator Targets</b>	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
<b>4.4. Rating</b>	The school <b>Meets Standard</b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
<b>Sub-indicators</b>	<b>Sub-indicators</b>	
	Utilizes standardized and/or classroom assessments as accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives	
	Distributes assessment results to classroom teachers in a timely and useful manner to influence instructional decisions	
	Selects assessments that have sufficient variety to guide instruction for a wide range of student learning abilities	
	Uses assessments with sufficient frequency to inform instructional decisions effectively	

Uses assessment results to guide instruction or make adjustments to curriculum.

The school uses assessments that are accurate and useful measures of established learning standards/objectives, including NWEA/MAP, Acuity/ECA, and classroom-made assessments on a regular testing schedule. Also supported by online educational programs and corresponding formative assessments, the school is able to assess and guide instruction for a wide range of student abilities. The Operator is largely responsible for installing the benchmark testing and data-collection systems used by the school. The Operator also is responsible for collecting and arraying the test data and redistributing it back to the school. Likewise, the Operator staff has provided the majority of guidance in how to examine and analyze data.

The school's vice principal and schoolwide leadership team functions also as the school data team, and there is no separate school-based data analysis facilitator. The coaching of teachers in the classroom is provided by shared coaches and the school's vice principal. The school follows structured data-discussion protocols and a regular meeting schedule to manage this work—the team meets biweekly to hold a “data dive,” and student data is regularly reviewed during morning leadership team meetings, regular professional learning community/team meetings, and longer Friday professional developments sessions. The latter two activities include targeted professional development to guide instruction and curriculum development.

School leadership has several additional ideas for how to meaningfully leverage 2013–14 assessment data to revise the curricular and instructional approaches used across classrooms. It will be important for the Operator to allow Arlington's school leadership to develop the educational program based on the unique school needs—focusing on greater student engagement and depth of understanding, also building team capacity and program sustainability.

4.5. Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?		
<b>Indicator Targets</b>	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
<b>4.5. Rating</b>	The school is <b>Approaching Standard</b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
<b>Sub-indicators</b>	<b>Sub-indicators</b>	
	Hiring processes are organized and used to support the success of new staff members	

	A sufficient number of faculty and staff are deployed to maximize instructional time and capacity
	faculty and staff are certified/trained in areas to which they are assigned
	Professional development is related to demonstrated needs for instructional improvement
	Professional development opportunities are determined through analyses of student attainment and improvement
	Teacher evaluation plans are explicit and regularly implemented with clear processes and criteria

Arlington’s hiring processes are organized and continue to be developed to support the success of new team members. The Operator School Turnaround Plan (05/12) describes the hiring process in the context of the teacher-evaluation plan. The plan is explicit with procedures, criteria, and rubrics. It provides a schedule showing regular implementation and also steps for hiring, including screening, interviews, and a final decision by a “hiring committee.”

Interviews are conducted by the building administration and appropriate specialists. The plan lists teacher expectations and a description of the ideal teacher, which presumably guide the interviews. These seem gauged to determine how a candidate would best fit with the school’s culture and mission, delivery of its educational program, and the demands of working in the school. To implement, the team leverages the Operator Director of HR to collect online resumes; from there, the Arlington hiring team will use a screening and interview process. This includes contacting candidates to determine mission alignment, emphasize the hard work ahead, and observe a mock-teaching lesson. This process can be strengthened by becoming further codified—the review team received no firm documentation of the interview process past the online submission to ensure that it is regularly followed.

The school uses an onboarding process to impart the mission/vision, Lemov’s teaching techniques, gradual release of responsibility, including videos/examples. The school uses subs/teacher-mentors to onboard teachers midyear. Administration and staff comment that the team is under-resourced. Based on reviews of school functions and observed/currently listed personnel, it appears that the school can benefit from additional resourcing: front desk, counselors, parent liaison, school-based instructional/coaching support, and hall monitors.

Faculty and staff are certified and trained in the areas to which they are assigned, and bios boast impressive credentials and engagement in the teaching profession; of the sample (n=14) reviewed via the Indiana Educator License Lookup and by obtaining additional licenses from the Operator, 100% held valid licenses, with one teacher in the process of converting to an Indiana license. The administrators indicate that a large percentage of their staff come from alternative route teacher certification programs; staff survey shows less than 33% are in contracted/time-bound programs, 33% possess more than five years’ experience, and 9% possess two–five years’ experience.

The Operator Plan outlines teacher orientation and PD topics. Building administration indicates there are organizational structures for PD, like teachers’ common planning time and weekly PD sessions, and say many additional PD topics are generated by classroom observation findings; however, teachers express that the PD

does not always meaningfully impact their classroom instruction. The school leverages benchmark test data provided from the Operator, which also drives PD and instructional adjustments.

Finally, the teacher-evaluation plan is very detailed and provides several tools for staff review; however, teachers commented that although they receive regular feedback from supervisors, their Semester 1 evaluations had not yet occurred. Building leadership confirmed this, and stated that they were waiting for Operator command but would move forward in the next 10 days to complete these reviews in lieu of this directive. Overall, the school has strong human resource mechanisms in place, but because overall resource issues (i.e., perceived and observed missing positions in several areas) and other breakdowns in stated management practices pose a significant concern to Arlington staff, this school is rated **Approaching Standard**.

4.6. Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?		
<b>Indicator Targets</b>	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
<b>4.6. Rating</b>	The school is <b>Approaching Standard</b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
<b>Sub-indicators</b>	<b>Sub-indicators</b>	
	Mission that is shared by all stakeholders	
	Stakeholders possess widespread knowledge and commitment to the intentions of the school's mission	

There is a published mission in the school turnaround plan submitted by the Operator (May 9, 2012; p. 9). It includes four components and is clear and futuristic. It is a part of the strategic plan for the school and aligned with the core beliefs (values) of the school, which also are published by the Operator in the strategic plan. However, interviews and surveys show there is confusion among staff over the school mission; for example, the principal and VP include one element of the published mission ("safe, secure environment") but leave other components out ("successful lifelong learners"), misinterpret others ("graduation and college attendance" instead of "opportunity for postsecondary education"), and add one ("data-driven instruction") not in the mission.

Teachers interviewed were equally unclear about the mission—misinterpreting, adding, or leaving out components. Even an Operator representative misinterprets the mission, saying it is "to get kids into selective

colleges and universities.” Also, there is confusion over the school’s common values: there are seven published “core Beliefs” (values), but the only one staff consistently alludes to is “...data must guide instruction.” Most staff refer to a list published in a student guide to behavior that forms the acronym KNIGHT; however, the acronym was incorrectly recited by staff during a focus group. Therefore, in light of the many of the augmentations, additions, and omissions, there does not seem to be consensus about a single school mission or set of values.

The mission/values was not observed to guide Arlington: faculty referred easily to five behavior rules but could not recite the KNIGHT acronym, and parents and staff alike mentioned that the school’s policies/operations sometimes undermine its stated mission—for example, having only one counselor for over 400 students, not offering advanced coursework, and assigning long out-of-school suspensions for perceived minor infractions. What the staff seems to have bought into and what seems to be guiding the school is a mission and values that focus on certain student behavioral norms, a safe learning environment, using data to guide instruction, and preparing students for college, so this school is rated **Approaching Standard**.

4.7. Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?		
<b>Indicator Targets</b>	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
<b>4.7. Rating</b>	The school is <b>Approaching Standard</b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
<b>Sub-indicators</b>	<b>Sub-indicators</b>	
	Rules are clearly stated and enforce positive behavior	
	Discipline approach possesses high expectations for student behavior	
	Interactions between faculty and students are respectful and supportive and faculty and students are clear about processes for resolution of conflicts	
	Interactions between faculty and administration are professional and constructive	





The Operator Turnaround Plan includes an overview of student behavior expectations, which focus on high expectations and positive behavior as embodied in the attributes of the KNIGHT acronym. Administrators note there is a school-based emphasis on positive behavior reinforcement that offers both rewards and punishments.

There is a student conduct code set by the Operator that is a more explicit description of policies, rules, infractions, and consequences. The student handbook references several points of contact for raising concerns. Staff members interviewed say that they incorporate, reinforce, and enforce these policies day-to-day, but note that there are policies they question.

Administration reports that parents also question these and indicate that some suspension policies negatively affect student achievement. Teachers indicate they see themselves as enforcing the discipline policies primarily in the classroom, and a reduction in staff has resulted in more behavior issues. Once they have referred a student for further disciplinary action they say they are out of the process, and in recent months, students have been sent right back to class due to a reduction in school personnel. In interviews and surveys, staff and administrators stress that interactions between students and teachers are professional and constructive. Observations support this.

Students are referred to as “scholars” to set the tone for Academics. One note is that staff referred to “Five Basic Rules” that the review team did not see cited elsewhere, the KNIGHT acronym is missing a letter in the hallway, and staff were not able to recite each value. These minor inconsistencies show a break in school culture.

Staff raised significant concerns about the Operator administration and roughly half are already planning to leave the school at the years’ end. Staff comments that the Operator is not helping them meet the school mission, and in fact, for some, its policies are impeding the mission. Faculty appreciates school-based administration and asked reviewers to delineate their performance from the Operator’s. Parents also commented that the school would be better off if the Operator would let school administrators make more decisions. For the discontent between staff and Operator, Arlington is perceived to be only **Approaching Standard**; however, the Operator has a strong infrastructure for educational programming in place and is pursuing additional means for relationship building with school-based staff.

4.8. Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?		
Indicator Targets	Does not meet standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>two or more</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Approaching standard	The school presents significant concerns in <u>one</u> of the sub-indicators.
	Meets standard	The school complies with and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below.
4.8. Rating		

	The school <u>Meets Standard</u> on this indicator for 2013-14.
<b>Sub- indicators</b>	<b>Sub-indicators</b>
	Communication is active and ongoing between the school and parents
	Communications utilized are both timely and relevant to parental concerns
	Communication of student academic progress and achievement is reported in a manner understood by parents
	Communication methods are designed to meet the needs of a diverse set of parents (e.g., communicating in parents' native languages, not communicating only in writing when many parents cannot read, holding meetings at convenient times for parents).

Arlington meets standards in this section of the report. It has active and ongoing communications between the school and its parents, including a biweekly newsletter, phone calls home from teachers, and e-mail blasts from its PowerSchool program. The school utilizes communication methods that are timely and relevant to those parents. For example, teachers are required to make five calls to parents each week to report on particular students, and the school has held parent meetings for those of new students to assist them with the transition to Arlington.

The school communicates student academic progress and achievement in reports that are understood by parents, and lastly, most of the school's communications methods meet the needs of a diverse set of parents, such as the school's practice of handing out report cards at different times at each marking period's end, so that parents with differing work schedules can make one of the meetings. School leaders are aware that if the number of Hispanic students increases, the school will need to translate its newsletters and other documents sent home into Spanish.

<b>4.9. Is there a high level of parent satisfaction?</b>		
<b>Indicator Targets</b>	Does not meet standard	Less than 70% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school
	Approaching standard	More than 70% but less than 80% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school
	Meets standard	More than 80% but less than 90% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school

	Exceeds standard	At least 90% of parents surveyed indicate that they are satisfied overall with the school
<b>4.9. Rating</b>	The school was <b><u>Not Evaluated</u></b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	

This section is unanswerable since the site visit team was not provided survey data, focus groups were not well attended, and site visit team members had minimal contact with families. The few families that site visit team members did talk with expressed satisfaction with the school's results and changed climate, specifically commending the orderly environment and high expectations for students; however, they expressed dissatisfaction with the Operator's control over staffing, and staff reported that some parents have complained to them about the discipline policy. This limited information, however, cannot be considered representative of the entire parent/family community.

<b>4.10. Is the school fulfilling its legal obligations related to access and services to students with limited English proficiency?</b>		
<b>Indicator Targets</b>	Does not meet standard	The school is <u>not</u> fulfilling its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires substantial improvement in the sub-indicators below
	Approaching standard	The school is <u>not yet completely</u> fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and requires <i>some</i> (but not considerable) improvement in the sub-indicators below
	Meets standard	The school <u>is fulfilling</u> its legal obligations regarding ESL students, and presents no concerns in the sub-indicators below
<b>4.10. Rating</b>	The school is <b><u>Approaching Standard</u></b> on this indicator for 2013-14.	
<b>Sub-indicators</b>	<b>Sub-indicators</b>	
	Appropriate staff have a clear understanding of current legislation	
	Research and effective practices relating to the provision of ESL services	
	Relationships with students, parents, and external providers that are well-managed and comply with law and regulation	



#### **Core Question 4: External Evaluation Turnaround Performance Framework Arlington Community High School**

Arlington Community High School is not yet completely fulfilling all of its legal obligations regarding ESL students, based on review without file audit. Appropriate staff members have a fairly clear understanding of current ESL legislation with some minor confusion about how ESL students are initially identified. ESL students are assessed annually using the LAS Links assessment, and their growth in language acquisition is monitored. The school provides ESL students with accommodations and modifications within the general education classroom but does not have the resources to provide pull-out language instruction. To the best of their ability, general education teachers, with the support of a Spanish teacher, serve ESL students within the general education classroom. School administrators communicate with parents when needed. This communication usually occurs in English.